

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PRESS RELEASE

Index: PRE 01/526/2011
13 October 2011

Malawi must arrest Sudan's al-Bashir during visit

Malawi should arrest wanted Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and surrender him to the International Criminal Court (ICC), Amnesty International said today.

Al-Bashir is due in Malawi tomorrow to attend a regional trade summit, despite two international warrants for his arrest on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes for his role in the Darfur conflict.

Malawian President Bingu wa Mutharika said this March that African leaders should only ever be tried domestically for their crimes, not by the ICC.

"President Mutharika's public reluctance to back the ICC is unacceptable," said Marek Marczyński, Research, Policy and Campaign Manager of Amnesty International's Campaign for International Justice.

"The authorities have legal obligations to provide real justice for victims of crimes against humanity and other crimes under international law in Darfur, and should not be welcoming international fugitives."

If Malawi fails to arrest President Omar al-Bashir, it would be in violation of its obligations under the Rome Statute of the ICC, which it ratified on 19 September 2002.

Since the Darfur conflict started in 2003, more than 300,000 people have been killed, thousands raped, and millions forcibly displaced.

An arrest warrant for President Bashir was issued by the ICC in March 2009 on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes. A further arrest warrant with three charges of genocide in Darfur was issued in July 2010.

Amnesty International has called on all members of the international community to assist the ICC in executing its arrest warrants in the Sudan situation.